

SECRET

REF ID: A676-78

25X1

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

Executive Registry

78-3849

November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THRU : Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

FROM : Richard Lehman
NIO for Warning

SUBJECT : Alert Memoranda

1. Action Requested: None; for information only.
2. Background: The monthly memoranda produced by the NIOs are obviously not the vehicle by which the DCI conveys short-term warning to the National Security apparatus. The need for such a vehicle was recognized in the past and an art form called the Alert Memorandum was invented to meet it. I discovered that, while it has fallen into disuse, the USIB decision establishing it is still in effect. I have therefore informed the NIOs that they should recommend to the DCI that an Alert Memorandum be issued whenever they judge that short-term warning is required, e.g., should it appear that the Shah is about to fall. I hope that this will become an integral part of the national warning system.
3. The Warning Working Group will review the mechanism in December with a view to any changes in concept or procedures that may be required.
4. As you have not, I am sure, had any acquaintance with this particular art form, I am attaching for your information the existing USIB procedures, a thoughtful IC Staff review of the Alert Memorandum exercise, and several sample Alert Memoranda.

Richard Lehman

Attachments

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

3302

83

USIB-D-28.5/12
15 December 1975

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Procedures for Alert Memoranda

MORI
review(s)
completed.

REFERENCES : a. USIB-D-28.5/11, 21 November 1975
b. USIB-D-28.5/8, 9 January 1975

On 15 December the United States Intelligence Board approved the subject procedures (as amended). Accordingly, a copy of the final USIB-approved Procedures for Alert Memoranda, which supersede reference b., is attached hereto for the information and guidance of all concerned.

25X1

Executive Secretary

Attachment

25X1

SECRET

SECRET

Attachment
USIB-D-28.5/12
15 December 1975

PROCEDURES FOR ALERT MEMORANDA

1. The Alert Memorandum (AM) is an interagency publication issued by the DCI on behalf of the Community. It provides explicit warning from the Director himself of possible developments abroad of major concern to the U.S. The AM is signed by the DCI, addressed to the members of WSAG, and disseminated, inter alia, to all USIB Principals and, via electrical transmission, appropriate embassies and field elements.

2. An AM may be initiated by the DCI or may be proposed by a USIB Principal, by a National Intelligence Officer (NIO), or by (or through) any other senior officer of the intelligence or foreign affairs communities. A proposal for an AM will be addressed to the DCI or the appropriate NIO. But, the decision to issue an AM will in all instances rest with the DCI.

3. Responsibility for the production of an AM will normally rest with the appropriate NIO, and he may call on any element of the Intelligence Community for support. Whenever possible, the NIO will coordinate a draft of the AM with appropriate USIB agencies, and dissenting views, if any, will be described in the Memorandum. The DCI, however, may authorize the NIO to limit or forego coordination when time is of the essence. All AMs will note the extent of coordination within the Community.

4. At the earliest possible time, the NIO should notify appropriate USIB agencies of the decision to produce an Alert Memorandum. * When time permits, he should also indicate the source of information that led to the decision, the extent of coordination being sought, the amount of assistance (if any) desired, and the likely time of issuance. When feasible, appropriate U. S. embassies and field elements should also be notified that an Alert Memorandum is being prepared and their views should be solicited.

*When feasible, NOIWON or other conferencing procedures may be used to so notify.

25X1

SECRET

SECRET

Attachment
USIB-D-28.5/12
15 December 1975

An AM will in most circumstances be a discrete paper which provides the basic rationale for the issuance of a warning. Occasionally, however, an AM may consist simply of a covering memorandum attached to an existing intelligence document, suggesting in essence that the policymaker should focus on the situation reported in the basic document.

5. An AM will also clearly indicate what special actions are being taken by the Community to ensure effective coverage of the situation, e.g., the initiation of special collection efforts, the establishment of crisis task forces, etc.

6. A supplementary AM on a crisis should be produced whenever, in the view of the DCI, the crisis has greatly intensified or changed in some especially significant way. The NIO should issue an appropriate advisory to the recipients of an AM whenever, in his judgment, events indicate that the crisis at hand has abated or terminated (unless that fact is apparent to all). Collection efforts arising from the issuance of the alert should also be modified or cancelled as appropriate.

- 2 -

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

25X1

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

USIB-D-28.5/10
22 October 1975

*for R1 -
extra copy*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : A Report on Intelligence Alert Memoranda

REFERENCES : a. USIB-D-28.5/8, 9 January 1975
b. USIB-D-28.5/9, 5 September 1975

1. The attached revised study, "A Report on Intelligence Alert Memoranda," is circulated for the information of the Board. This Study was prepared by the Product Review Division of the Intelligence Community Staff in response to a request from the DCI. It incorporates suggestions provided by the USIB Members.

2. The USIB document "Procedures for Alert Memoranda," reference a., is being revised to reflect the recommendations in the study and will be forwarded for USIB consideration at an early date.

25X1

Executive Secretary

Attachment

MORI CDF DCIR#384198

X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

SECRET

Secret

25X1

A Report on Intelligence Alert Memoranda

Prepared by the
Product Review Division, Intelligence Community Staff

Secret

25X1

DCI/IC-75-3624
October 1975

Copy **N^o 94**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
KEY FINDINGS	1
INTRODUCTION	4
DISCUSSION	6
The Threshold: A Fundamental Issue	6
Too Many or Too Few?	7
Community Involvement	8
Terminating the Warning	9
Toward More Standardization?	9
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	10
ANNEX—Review of the Production Process for Individual Alert Memoranda	13

SECRET

25X1

A REPORT ON INTELLIGENCE ALERT MEMORANDA

October 1975

This study, prepared by the Product Review Division of the Intelligence Community Staff, responds to a request by the Director of Central Intelligence for a review of *Intelligence Alert Memoranda* produced to date. He wished to know both how well the system has served him and the community and how well it has served the high-level consumer. This report has been circulated among USIB Principals, and they have formally concurred in the review's findings. The document, "Procedures for Alert Memoranda," dated 9 January 1975, is being revised to reflect the recommendations noted in the study.

KEY FINDINGS

In view of the numbers of persons who either were important recipients or had some role in producing Alert Memoranda, a unanimity of views on all aspects of this intelligence medium was neither expected nor achieved. There was, however, substantial agreement among both producers and senior-level consumers on the following key points:

- The basic concept of the Alert Memorandum (AM) is sound. Those that have been produced to date have by and large done what they were designed to do.
- Alert Memoranda are being seen—and their message noted—by principals and senior aides in the national security decision process; they are not being short-stopped by lower-level staff mechanisms.
- The system is not being seriously abused by overuse. Given the circumstances which led to their preparation, few of the fifteen Alert Memoranda so far produced are judged to have been hasty or ill-advised. In general, those consulted judged this on the whole to be a good record.
- Conversely, no serious charges have been leveled at the community for neglecting the AM form when it might have been used. (One possible such case—the Mayaguez incident—was mentioned by one respondent, and this point is discussed later in the paper.)

SECRET

SECRET

- There was general recognition among most of those interviewed that the production process has evolved—and improved—with the passage of time and as experience in this form has been gained.

Nevertheless, differences of view—some fundamental in nature—surfaced on a number of points of form and substance. The more important of these are:

- There are varying perceptions of the appropriate criteria for selecting particular situations to be handled by Alert Memoranda. This reflects a lack of consensus on the relative weights that should be placed on how important the subject is to US interests, how quickly it needs to be addressed by policy councils, and how likely it is to occur.
- Some respondents suggested that it would be helpful to have a more standardized format—one that had better attention-getting qualities and ensuring that each AM uniformly addressed certain questions. Others emphasized the values of an unconstrained form and style.
- Although the AM was designed as a community mechanism—and the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) has sought the views of other agencies when time permitted—the Alert Memorandum is still viewed by many to be either a CIA product or as reflecting a personal concern of the DCI rather than of the community. Close involvement by other agencies in recommending or participating in producing Alert Memoranda has been minimal—far less than we judge to have been the goal of the DCI and the USIB in establishing the system.

The findings are covered in greater detail in following sections, and recommendations are set forth beginning on page 10. The recommendations themselves are relatively minor. Indeed, the flexibility of the process has been important to its evolution and we see little need to introduce major new restrictive or prescriptive provisions.

An exception involves a few practices that have grown out of experience in producing Alert Memoranda and that now have become normative to the process. They should—in our view—be codified in the USIB-approved “Procedures for Alert Memoranda,” dated 9 January 1975. There are three of these:

- The practice of speedily notifying Washington area intelligence operations centers as soon as a decision has been made to produce an Alert Memorandum.

- The practice—when time permits—of promptly notifying US embassies and other appropriate field elements in the geographic area discussed that an Alert Memorandum is in process, with an invitation for comments and suggestions.
- The practice of electrically disseminating the finished paper to those same embassies and field elements.

In addition, we believe community participation would be made easier if—following close behind notification of other agencies that an AM is being prepared—the responsible NIO would forward to those same agencies an LDX statement briefly covering the salient facts of the case, including critical source references, a statement of the intended thrust of the paper, and an indication of the planned time of issuance and the extent of coordination sought.

The remaining recommendations for the most part can be met if the DCI and USIB place heavier emphasis on existing procedures to try to meet problems seen by some of our respondents. USIB discussion, for example, might help to clarify some of these issues. This particularly applies to the question of how to achieve greater community involvement in initiating and producing Alert Memoranda.

INTRODUCTION

In a memorandum to USIB Principals dated 28 August 1974, the Director of Central Intelligence asked for early USIB consideration of a procedure for alerting the national policymaker "to the potential danger of an unfolding situation as early as possible in the unfolding process." Mr. Colby went on to say that the purpose of such an alerting mechanism would be "to put WSAG formally on notice that the community sees the possibility of a major problem, to inform it of steps taken to improve intelligence collection, and, if appropriate, to recommend that WSAG meet on the problem."

On 12 September the USIB agreed in principle to the idea, and the Intelligence Community Staff was directed to produce and coordinate within the community a statement on procedures. The completed document, "Procedures for Alert Memoranda," was approved by USIB and issued on 9 January 1975.

In the period since the subject was first raised at USIB, fifteen Alert Memoranda have been prepared. The first three of these were issued before formal USIB approval of the *Procedures*, but even those three were clearly responsive to the original DCI memorandum, and in accord with the USIB expression of approval. They have, therefore, been included in this survey. In all, the list of *Alert Memoranda* to 1 August include:

Alert Memoranda Produced During September 1974 to August 1975



25X1

A case study approach was used in this review. For each Alert Memorandum produced we:

- interviewed those persons who were key to its initiation and production;
- reviewed with them the evidence and background circumstances relating to the memorandum;

SECRET

- consulted with others in the community on their views on the production and coordination process; and
- sought the views of consumers concerning the impact of the Alert Memoranda and their value to the policymaking process.

Summary statements of the results of this survey of the individual Alert Memoranda are included in the Annex.

We were able to be more thorough in our coverage of the circumstances surrounding the initiation, production, and issuance of the Alert Memoranda, relative to what we could accomplish in the survey of the *impact* of the alerts on national security *policymakers*. But even on the consumer side we feel we have obtained fairly accurate reflections of the views of WSAG Principals on the general question of the utility of the alerting system, largely through discussions with their senior aides.

We also considered major differences among Alert Memoranda in form, coverage, and objectives. And in discussions with both producers and consumers, we sought to identify—with benefit of hindsight—any that seemed to have been ill-advised and hasty or, alternatively, any subjects that might profitably have been addressed by Alert Memoranda but were not.

And finally, we reviewed the procedures used to produce, coordinate, and issue the Alert Memorandum to determine if changes in the USIB instructions—contained in USIB-D-28.5/8, "Procedures for Alert Memoranda," 9 January 1975—might usefully be made.

SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP83B01027R000200040005-7

Next 41 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP83B01027R000200040005-7